(b) whether these orders are not followed properly by Railways;

(c) if so, the reasons for violation of its own orders; and

(d) if not, the reasons why the House was denied information in answer to Part(d) of Unstarred Question 3786 while some of the RTIs reveal that record is maintained?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Instructions issued *vide* letter No.94/TG-I/20/P/8 dated 02.08.1994 refers to reservation requisitions, which are submitted at reservation counters seeking booking of berths, for which the period of preservation is six months, except in those cases where some action is under process. Instructions issued *vide* letter No. 98/TG-1/14/P dated 23rd April 1998 refers to the requisitions given for confirmation of berths out of emergency quota for which the period of preservation is three months from the date of journey. Zonal Railways are required to preserve these records for the period prescribed above.

(d) In part (d) of the Unstarred Question No.3786 replied on 07-08-2009, the reference was to reservation requisitions received by all Divisions and Zones and reservations confirmed against them for a specified period. It may be appreciated that Railway is a vast organisation and approximately six lakh reservation requisitions are received every day. The records of these requisitions are preserved for the prescribed period. However, because of such large number of reservation requisitions received every day, details of such data are not compiled. Specific records, in individual cases, are however, made available on demand. While no specific RTI case has been mentioned, it is possible that at some location, information in an individual case would have been compiled when sought for under Right to Information Act. It is humbly stated that the reply to part (d) of unstarred Parliament Question No.3786 dated 7th August 2009 was based on the available facts.

Improvement in primary education

*40. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that India ranks woefully at 101st place in the Global Competitive Index due to poor primary education in the country;

(b) whether Government is also aware that due to poor quality of primary education, the economic competitiveness is also being affected;

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to improve primary education in the country and the infrastructure in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken to arrest the drop-out rate and bring uniform syllabus for the entire country?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) According to a Report of the World Economic Forum for 2009-10, India stands at 49th position in the Global Competitiveness Index. In respect of Health and Primary Education, its position is at 101, while its rank is 100 for primary education.

(b) to (d) Government is committed to universalisation of elementary education and has taken significant steps to enhance access, retention and quality of elementary education in the country. Towards this end, the Government implements various programmes and policies including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. Under SSA, 1.47 lakh primary schools have

been upgraded to have upper primary classes, 9.86 lakh teachers have been recruited, children are provided free textbooks and teachers provided in-service training. Under Mid-Day Meal Scheme, which supports the efforts under the SSA, hot cooked wholesome mid day meal is provided to children of Classes I to VII in all Government and Government aided schools, Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education Centres. These interventions have contributed in reducing the drop out rates and increasing enrollment and retention at elementary school level.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, casts a duty on the Central Government, State Governments and local authorities to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years.

There is no proposal for a uniform syllabus throughout the country for primary education.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Steel production in the country

127. SHRI N. R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether production of steel in the country is very low against the targets set in successive Five Year Plans;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether China's steel production has reached the level of 460 MT while India still struggling at 45 MT;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the States of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have signed number of MoUs to set up steel plants in their States and none has materialized due to non-availability of raw materials; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI VIRBHADRA SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Five Year Plans did not lay down any target of steel production.

(c) and (d) As per the provisional data, the crude steel production of China and India was 502 MT and 55 MT respectively in 2008. A rapid growth in infrastructure development and indigenous capacity for production supported by strong and sustained growth in demand of steel and sustained GDP growth rate are responsible for the growth of steel demand in China. However, over the past 5 years, the steel consumption in India has grown at cumulative average growth rate of 9.5% per annurn. It is also expected that, with the growth of the economy, steel demand in India will continue to be steady and India will be a major steel producing and consuming country in the world.

(e) and (f) State Governments of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have signed a large number of MoUs with entrepreneurs for setting up of steel plants in the State. As per the information available in the Ministry of Steel, the details of MoUs signed and the present status of the projects, state-wise and project-wise, are given in the enclosed Statement I, II and III.